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Watershed Area Steering Committee
Upper San Gabriel River Watershed
Joshua Nelson, Chair

Re: Support for the Zamora Park Renovation Project

Dear Mr. Nelson and members of the Upper San Gabriel River Watershed Area Steering Committee,

My name is Jessica Ancona, proud Mayor of the City of El Monte. I'm writing to express my strong support for the Zamora Park Renovation Project proposal submitted to the Safe Clean Water Program by the City of El Monte.

The renovation of Zamora Park was initiated by community members in 2017 who approached the El Monte City Council and Department of Recreation and Parks to renovate their 50+ year old neighborhood park. Since then over nine community meetings have been held to design the park, with additional meetings held and attended by project staff to inform neighbors and community members about the project.

The Zamora Park Renovation is a multi-benefit project that will address ongoing community access, water quality, and quality of life issues. The park is located in the crowded River East neighborhood of El Monte, a community bounded by the 10 Freeway to the south, 605 Freeway and San Gabriel River to the east, and the major thoroughfares Ramona Boulevard and Peck Road to the north and west. The urban development in this dense area creates high levels of impervious surfaces, leading to ponding water and local flooding, and leaves residents vulnerable to air pollution and urban heat island impacts.

Nearly 16,000 residents live within a half-mile of Zamora Park, and there are no other public green spaces in the community. Zamora Park is underused due to outdated and deteriorating amenities, lack of walking paths, and safety concerns due to inadequate lighting. Park neighbors report driving to parks in other cities just to find outdoor recreation space they feel safe enjoying with their families.

The renovation will transform the 4.48-acre Zamora Park into a multi-benefit green infrastructure project that captures stormwater on site using nature-based solutions that mimic natural stormwater management and infiltration processes by diverting runoff from adjacent impervious areas and roofs into a subterranean infiltration basin, bioswales, and natural planting areas. Updated community-requested amenities like a new playground and splash pad, as well as walking paths and lighting, will draw people into the park and create a safe place to recreate.

The project will add over 100 new trees, as well as shrubs and groundcover where there is currently only turf. All plantings will be native or drought-tolerant, and will not only aid in stormwater capture, but will

also create shade, native habitat, and improve the overall experience of Zamora Park, bringing pride and honor to the community

The project will employ Los Angeles Conservation Corps members, providing job skills training, education, and work experience to young adults 18-25 years old – many of whom come from disadvantaged and severely disadvantaged communities – which lead to industry recognized credentials and certifications, thereby increasing their opportunities for success.

The Zamora Park Renovation Project meets the Safe Clean Water Program stormwater and community benefit goals. It will create desperately needed accessible green space to enhance recreation, community gathering, and overall health for residents of El Monte, a critically underserved community. It will create tangible, positive stormwater management impacts, and we urge you to support his project.

Sincerely,

Jessica Ancona

Jessica Ancona
Mayor, El Monte City